United Nations S/2009/12

Security Council

Distr.: General
7 January 2009

Original: English

Letter dated 5 January 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith a letter addressed to the Secretary-General dated 4 January 2009, from Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Misnad, Consort of His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar, in connection with the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine.

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex were issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nassir Abdulaziz **Al-Nasser**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

09-20237 (E) 070109 080109

Annex to the letter dated 5 January 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairperson of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development and as President of the International Organization for the Protection of Educational Institutions and their Employees in Crisis Areas, headquartered in Qatar, in order to express my profound condemnation of and concern over the destruction of educational institutions and the targeting of students and teachers as a result of the Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip.

In keeping with my role as Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), I also contacted Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, and expressed to him the same concern. I also told him of the need to convert a sufficient number of schools and educational institutions into safe havens. Combatants will be barred from entering those havens and occupation forces will not be permitted to attack them, inasmuch as such actions constitute a violation of international law and of relevant international instruments.

I should like, through you, to call on the Security Council to develop without delay a plan to identify these schools and institutions and to mark them in a conspicuous manner so that they might serve as safe havens for students and their families. It is also important that humanitarian aid and basic materials should be allowed to enter those schools and institutions and that the sick and injured should be allowed to be transported out of them.

I should also like to propose the involvement of the specialized agencies of the United Nations and of humanitarian organizations recognized for their work in this field, such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in order to ensure the success of this plan and to develop practical measures for its implementation.

You will recall that, in coordination with UNESCO, I launched an initiative to protect educational institutions and their employees in Iraq after those institutions had been threatened with destruction and hundreds of academics had been assassinated. That initiative culminated in the establishment of the aforementioned International Organization for the Protection of Educational Institutions.

I should like to thank you in advance for your efforts to refer this matter to the Security Council without delay for immediate consideration and action. I am also counting on you to remind the occupying Power of its responsibilities under international law and the relevant international instruments on the protection of civilian targets, including educational institutions, their employees and their beneficiaries.

(*Signed*) Mozah bint Nasser **Al-Misnad**